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The Nestorian Monument

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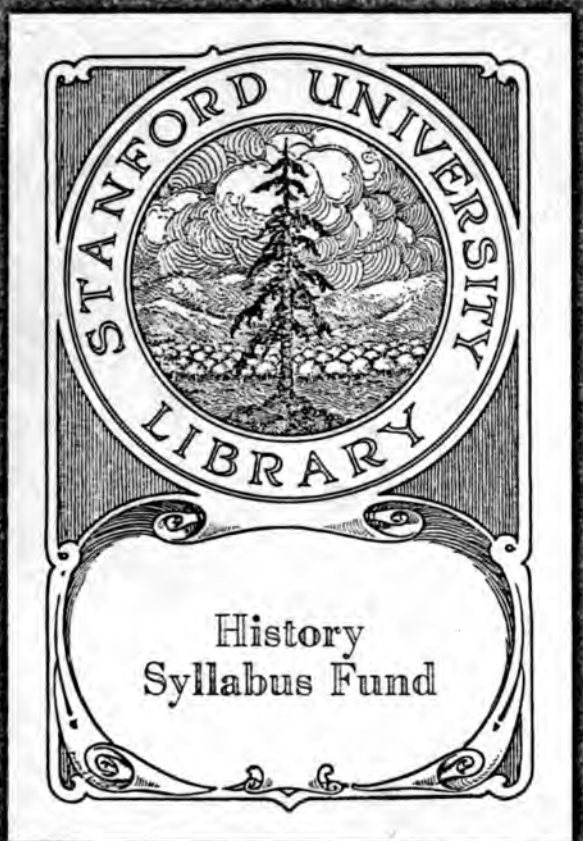

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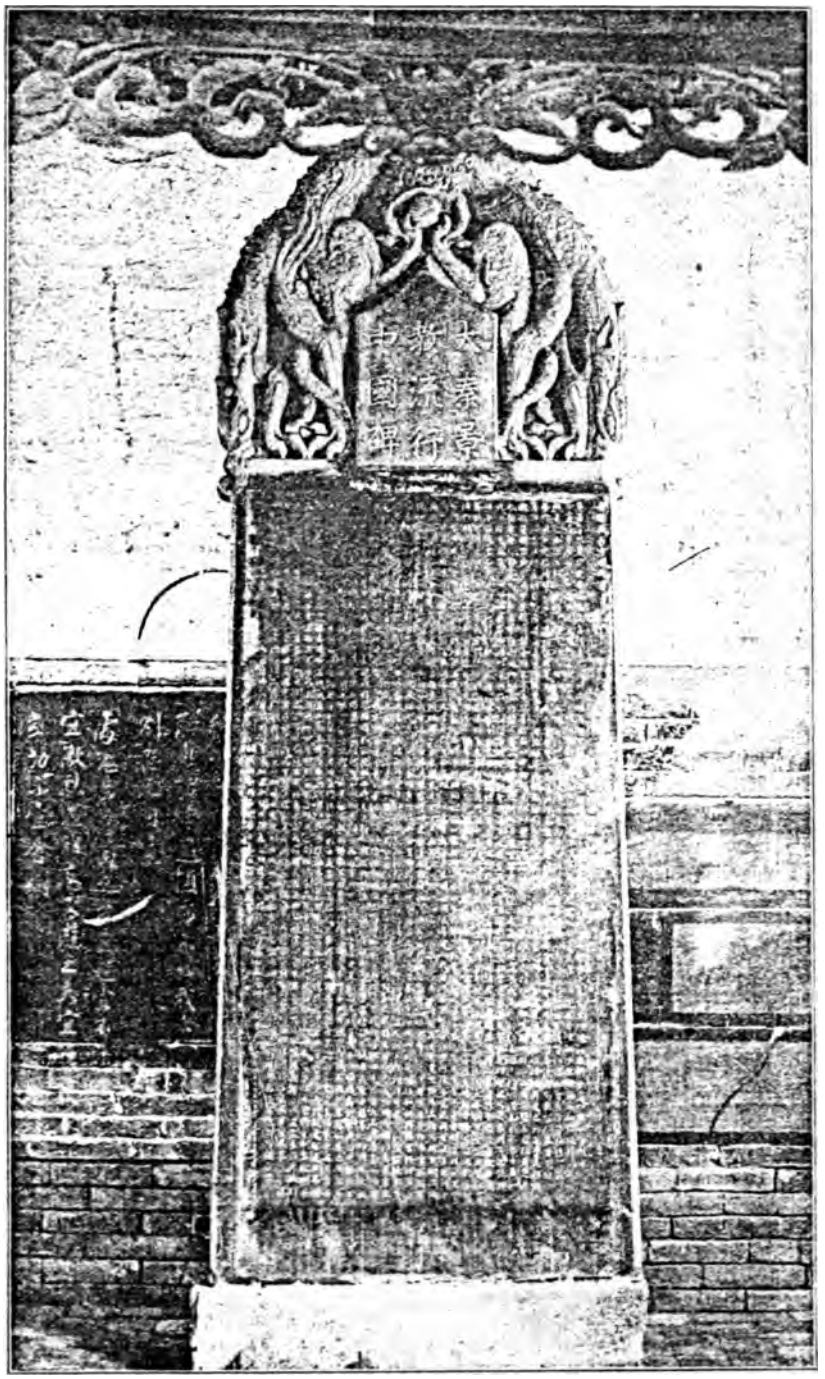

THE ORIGINAL NESTORIAN STONE.
As it now stands in the *Peilin* or "Forest of Tablets" in Sianfu.

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THE
NESTORIAN MONUMENT

AN ANCIENT RECORD OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EXPEDITION OF

FRITS V. HOLM

MEMBER OF ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, LONDON, ETC., ETC.

EDITED BY

DR. PAUL CARUS

CONTAINING:
MR. HOLM'S ACCOUNT OF HOW THE REPLICA WAS PROCURED, THE ORIGINAL CHINESE TEXT OF THE INSCRIPTION, A. WYLIE'S ENGLISH TRANSLATION, AND HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE NESTORIANS

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THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK.

THE Nestorian monument in the interior of China is of extreme interest to all students of religion, especially in the field of the history of Christian missions. It was set up in 781 A. D., and since it was discovered by accident in 1625, several Chinese and Western scholars have made it the object of their inquiry.

Mr. Frits V. Holm of Denmark has recently undertaken the laborious task to procure a replica of the stone which he has brought to the United States.

In art "replica" means an exact copy of the original made by the artist himself. For simplicity's sake, however, we follow Mr. Holm in using the term in the sense that his copy is exactly like the original, made of the same material so that only with the greatest difficulty could it be distinguished from the original.

The present little book contains all the information necessary for a comprehension of the significance of the monument, its history, its place in the history of China and its meaning to Christianity.

The contents of the present publication are as follows:

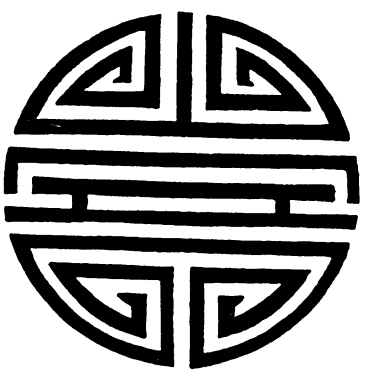
The Original Text of the Nestorian Monument.

Translation of the Nestorian Inscription by A. Wylie.

The Holm-Nestorian Expedition to Sian 1907, by Frits V. Holm; followed by a Communication on the Exploits of Mr. Von Holm.

Nestorius and the Nestorians.

The Nestorians in China. According to the late S. Wells Williams.



THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE NESTORIAN MONUMENT.

景教流行中國碑頌并序　大秦寺僧景淨述

粵若常然眞寂。先判十字以定四方。鼓元風而生二氣。暗空易而天地開。日月運而晝夜作。匠成萬物。然立初人。別賜良和。令鎭化海。渾元之性。虛而不盈。素蕩之心。本無希嗜。洎乎娑殫施妄。卸飾純精。閒平大於此是之中。隙冥同於彼非先而无元。窅然窒虛。後後而妙有。挹玄樞而造化。紗衆聖以元尊者。其惟我三一妙身無元眞主。阿羅呵歟。

大秦景教流行中國碑

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之內。是以三百六十五種。肩隨結轍。競織法羅。或指物以托宗。或空有以淪二。或禱祀以邀福。或伐善以驕人。智慮營營。思情役役。茫然無得。煎迫轉燒。積昧亡途。久迷休復。於是我 三一分身景尊彌施訶。戢隱眞威。同人出代。神天宣慶。室女誕聖於大秦。景宿告祥。波斯睹耀以來貢。圓廿四聖有說之舊法。理家國於大猷。設三一淨風無言之新教。陶良用於正信。制八境之度。鍊塵成眞。啟三常之門。開生滅死。

愍景日以破暗府。魔妄於是乎悉摧。掉慈航以登明宮。含靈於是乎旣濟。能事斯畢。亭午昃眞。經留廿七部。張元化以發玄。開法浴水風。滌浮華而潔虛白。印持十字。融四照以合無拘。擊木震仁惠之音。東禮趣生榮之路。存嶺所以有外行。削頂所以無內情。禾畜滅獲。均貴賤於人。不聚貨財。亦罄遺于我。齋以伏識而成。戒以靜愼爲固。七時禮讚。大庇存亡。七日一薦。洗心反素。眞常之道。妙而難名。切用昭彰。強稱景教。

惟道非聖不宏。聖非道不大。道聖符契。天下文明。太宗文皇帝光華啟運。明聖臨人。大秦國有上德曰阿羅本。占青雲而載眞經望風律以馳艱險。貞觀九祀。至於長安。帝使宰臣房公玄齡。揔仗西郊。賓迎入內。翻經書殿。問道禁闥深知正眞。特令傳授。貞觀十有二年。秋七月。詔曰。道無常名。聖無常體。隨方設教。密濟羣生。大秦國大德阿羅本。遠特經像。來獻上京。祥其教旨。玄妙無爲。觀其元宗。生成立要。

辭無繁說。理有忘筌。濟物利人。宜行天下。所司即於京義寧坊造大秦寺一所。度僧廿一人。宗周德喪。青駕西昇。巨唐道光。景風東扇。旋令有司。將帝寫眞。轉摸寺壁。天姿汎彩。英朗景門。聖蹟騰祥。永輝法界。按西域圖記。及漢魏史策。大秦國。南統珊瑚之海。北極鼠賓之山。西望仙境花林。東接長風弱水。其土出火綃布。返魂香明月珠。夜光璧。俗無侵盜。人有樂康。法非景不行。主非德不立。土宇廣闊。

大秦景教流行中國碑

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文物昌明　高宗大帝。克恭纘祖。潤色眞宗。而於諸州各置景寺仍崇阿羅本爲鎭國大法主。法流十道國富元休。寺滿百城。家殷景福。聖歷年。釋子用壯。謄口於東周。先天末。下士大笑。訕謗於西鎬有若僧首羅含。大德及烈。並金方貴緒。物外高僧。共振玄綱俱維絕紐　玄宗至道。皇帝。令宰國等五王親臨福宇。建立壇墠。法棟暫撓而更崇。道石時傾而復正。天寶初。令大將軍高力士。送五聖寫

眞寺內安置。賜絹百匹。奉慶睿圖。龍顏雖遠。弓劍可攀。日角舒光天顏咫尺。三載大秦國有僧佶和。瞻星向化。望日朝尊。詔僧羅含僧普論等一七人。與大德佶和。於興慶宮修功德。於是天題寺榜額載龍書。寶裝璀翠。灼爍丹霞。睿扎宏空。騰凌激日。寵賚比南山峻極。沛澤與東海齊深。道無不可所可可名。聖無不作。所作可述肅宗文明皇帝。於靈武等五郡。重立景寺。元善資而福祚。開大慶臨而皇業建。

代宗文武皇帝。恢張聖運。從事無爲。每於降誕之辰。錫天香以告成功。頒御饌以光景眾。且乾以美利。故能廣生。聖以體元。故能亭毒。我建中聖神文武皇帝。披八政以黜陟幽明。闡九疇以維新景命。化通玄理。祝無愧心。至於方大而虛。靜專而恕。廣慈救衆苦。善貸被羣生者。我修行之大猷。汲引之階漸也。若使風雨時。天下靜人能理。物能清。存能昌。歿能樂。念生響應。情發自誠者。我景力能事之功用也。大施主金紫光祿大夫。同朔方節度副使。試殿中監賜紫袈裟。僧伊斯。和而好惠。聞道勤行。遠自王舍之城。聿來中夏術高三代。藝博十全。始効節於丹廷。乃策名於王帳。中書令汾陽郡王。郭公子儀。初揔戎於朔方也。肅宗俾之從邁。雖見親於卧內不自異於行間。爲公爪牙。作軍耳目。能散祿賜。不積於家。獻臨恩之頗黎。布辭憩之金罽。或仍其舊寺。或重廣法堂。崇飾廊宇。如翬斯飛。更効景門。依仁施利。每歲集四寺僧徒。虔事精供。僯諸五旬。餕者來而飯之。寒者來而衣之。病者療而起之。死者葬而安之。

大秦景教流行中國碑

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清節遠娑。未聞斯美。白衣景士。今見其人。願刻洪碑。以揚休烈。詞曰　眞主无元。湛寂常然。權與匠化。起地立天。分身出代。救度無邊。日昇暗滅。咸證眞玄。赫赫文皇。道貫前王。乘時撥亂。乾廓坤張。明明景教。言歸我唐。翻經建寺。存沒舟航。百福皆作。萬那之康。高宗纘祖。更築精宇。和宮偃朗。徧滿中土。眞道宣明。式封法主。人有樂康。物無災苦。　玄宗啟聖。克修眞正。御牓揚輝。天書蔚映。皇圖璀璨。率土高敬。庶績咸熙。人賴其慶。　肅宗來復。天威引駕。聖月舒晶。祥風掃夜。祚歸皇室。秋氛永謝。止沸定塵。造我區夏。代宗孝義。德合天地。開貸生成。物資美利。香以報功。仁以作施。暘谷來威。月窟畢覿　建中統極。聿修明德。武肅四溟。文清萬域。燭臨人隱。鏡觀物色。六合昭蘇。百蠻取則。道惟廣今應惟審。強名言今演三一。主能作今臣能述。建豐碑今頌元吉。大唐建中二年。歲在作噩太簇月七日。大耀森文日建立。持法主僧寧恕知東方之景衆也朝議郎前行台州司士叅軍。呂秀巖書

TRANSLATION OF THE NESTORIAN INSCRIPTION.

BY A. WYLIE.

Tablet Eulogizing the Propagation of the Illustrious Religion in China, With a Preface; Composed by King-Tsing, A Priest of the Syrian Church.

BEHOLD the unchangeably true and invisible, who existed through all eternity without origin; the far-seeing perfect intelligence, whose mysterious existence is everlasting; operating on primordial substance he created the universe, being more excellent than all holy intelligences, inasmuch as he is the source of all that is honorable. This is our eternal true lord God, triune and mysterious in substance. He appointed the cross as the means for determining the four cardinal points, he moved the original spirit, and produced the two principles of nature; the sombre void was changed, and heaven and earth were opened out; the sun and moon revolved, and day and night commenced; having perfected all inferior objects, he then made the first man; upon him he bestowed an excellent disposition, giving him in charge the government of all created beings; man, acting out the original principles of his nature, was pure and unostentatious; his unsullied and expansive mind was free from the least inordinate desire; until Satan introduced the seeds of falsehood, to deteriorate his purity of principle; the opening thus commenced in his virtue gradually enlarged, and by this crevice in his nature was obscured and rendered vicious; hence three hundred and sixty-five sects followed each other in continuous track, inventing every species of doctrinal complexity; while some pointed to material objects as the source of their faith, others reduced all to vacancy, even to the annihilation of the two primeval principles; some sought to call down blessings by prayers and supplications, while others by an assumption of excellence held themselves up as superior to their fellows; their

intellects and thoughts continually wavering, their minds and affections incessantly on the move, they never obtained their vast desires, but being exhausted and distressed they revolved in their own heated atmosphere; till by an accumulation of obscurity they lost their path, and after long groping in darkness they were unable to return. Thereupon, our Trinity being divided in nature, the illustrious and honorable Messiah, veiling his true dignity, appeared in the world as a man; angelic powers promulgated the glad tidings, a virgin gave birth to the Holy One in Syria; a bright star announced the felicitous event, and Persians[1] observing the splendor came to present tribute; the ancient dispensation, as declared by the twenty-four holy men,[2] was then fulfilled, and he laid down great principles for the government of families and kingdoms; he established the new religion of the silent operation of the pure spirit of the Triune; he rendered virtue subservient to direct faith; he fixed the extent of the eight boundaries,[3] thus completing the truth and freeing it from dross; he opened the gate of the three constant principles,[4] introducing life and destroying death; he suspended the bright sun to invade the chambers of darkness, and the falsehoods of the devil were thereupon defeated; he set in motion the vessel of mercy by which to ascend to the bright mansions, whereupon rational beings were then released, having thus completed the manifestation of his power, in clear day he ascended to his true station. Twenty-seven sacred books[5] have been left, which disseminate intelligence by unfolding the original transforming principles. By the rule for admission, it is the custom to apply the water of baptism, to wash away all superficial show and to cleanse and purify the neophytes. As a seal, they hold the cross, whose influence is reflected in every direction, uniting all without distinction. As they strike the wood, the fame of their benevolence is diffused abroad; worshiping toward the east, they hasten on the way to life and glory; they preserve the beard to symbolize their outward actions, they shave the crown to

[1] *Po-sz'*, "Persians." This name was well known to the Chinese at that time, being the designation of an extensive sect then located in the Empire, and the name of a nation with which they had held commercial and political intercourse for several centuries. The statement here is in admirable harmony with the general tradition of the early Church, that the Magi or wise men mentioned in Matthew's Gospel were no other than philosophers of the Parsee sect.

[2] The "holy men" denote the writers of the books of the Old Testament.

[3] The "eight boundaries" are inexplicable; some refer them to the beatitudes.

[4] The "three constant principles" may perhaps mean faith, hope, and charity.

[5] Exactly the number we have in the New Testament.

indicate the absence of inward affections; they do not keep slaves, but put noble and mean all on an equality; they do not amass wealth, but cast all their property into the common stock; they fast, in order to perfect themselves by self-inspection; they submit to restraints, in order to strengthen themselves by silent watchfulness; seven times a day they have worship and praise for the benefit of the living and the dead; once in seven days they sacrifice, to cleanse the heart and return to purity.

It is difficult to find a name to express the excellence of the true and unchangeable doctrine; but as its meritorious operations are manifestly displayed, by accommodation it is named the Illustrious Religion. Now without holy men, principles cannot become expanded; without principles, holy men cannot become magnified; but with holy men and right principles, united as the two parts of a signet, the world becomes civilized and enlightened.

In the time of the accomplished Emperor Taitsung, the illustrious and magnificent founder of the dynasty, among the enlightened and holy men who arrived was the Most-virtuous Olopun, from the country of Syria. Observing the azure clouds, he bore the true sacred books; beholding the direction of the winds, he braved difficulties and dangers. In the year A. D. 635 he arrived at Chang-an; the Emperor sent his Prime Minister, Duke Fang Hiuen-ling; who, carrying the official staff to the west border, conducted his guest into the interior; the sacred books were translated in the imperial library, the sovereign investigated the subject in his private apartments; when becoming deeply impressed with the rectitude and truth of the religion, he gave special orders for its dissemination. In the seventh month of the year A. D. 638 the following imperial proclamation was issued:

"Right principles have no invariable name, holy men have no invariable station; instruction is established in accordance with the locality, with the object of benefiting the people at large. The Greatly-virtuous Olopun, of the kingdom of Syria, has brought his sacred books and images from that distant part, and has presented them at our chief capital. Having examined the principles of this religion, we find them to be purely excellent and natural; investigating its originating source, we find it has taken its rise from the establishment of important truths; its ritual is free from perplexing expressions, its principles will survive when the framework is forgot; it is beneficial to all creatures; it is advantageous to mankind. Let it be published throughout the Empire, and let the proper authority build a Syrian church in the capital in the I-ning May, which shall

be governed by twenty-one priests. When the virtue of the Chau dynasty declined, the rider on the azure ox ascended to the west; the principles of the great Tang becoming resplendent, the Illustrious breezes have come to fan the East."

Orders were then issued to the authorities to have a true portrait of the Emperor taken; when it was transferred to the wall of the church, the dazzling splendor of the celestial visage irradiated the Illustrious portals. The sacred traces emitted a felicitous influence, and shed a perpetual splendor over the holy precincts. According to the Illustrated Memoir of the Western Regions, and the historical books of the Han and Wei dynasties, the kingdom of Syria reaches south to the Coral Sea; on the north it joins the Gem Mountains; on the west it extends toward the borders of the immortals and the flowery forests; on the east it lies open to the violent winds and tideless waters. The country produces fire-proof cloth, life-restoring incense, bright moon-pearls, and night-lustre gems. Brigands and robbers are unknown, but the people enjoy happiness and peace. None but Illustrious laws prevail; none but the virtuous are raised to sovereign power. The land is broad and ample, and its literary productions are perspicuous and clear.

The Emperor Kautsung respectfully succeeded his ancestor, and was still more beneficent toward the institution of truth. In every province he caused Illustrious churches to be erected, and ratified the honor conferred upon Olopun, making him the great conservator of doctrine for the preservation of the State. While this doctrine pervaded every channel, the State became enriched and tranquility abounded. Every city was full of churches, and the royal family enjoyed lustre and happiness. In the year A. D. 699 the Buddhists, gaining power, raised their voices in the eastern metropolis;[6] in the year A. D. 713, some low fellows excited ridicule and spread slanders in the western capital. At that time there was the chief priest Lo-han, the Greatly-virtuous Kie-leih, and others of noble estate from the golden regions, lofty-minded priests, having abandoned all worldly interests; who unitedly maintained the grand principles and preserved them entire to the end.

The high-principled Emperor Hiuentsung caused the Prince of Ning and others, five princes in all, personally to visit the felicitous edifice; he established the place of worship; he restored the con-

[6] "Eastern metropolis" is *Tung Chau*, literally "Eastern Chau." The Empire was at this time under the government of the Empress Wu Tsih-tien, who had removed her residence from Chang-an [Sian-fu] to Lohyang in Honan.

secrated timbers which had been temporarily thrown down; and re-erected the sacred stones which for a time had been desecrated.

In 742 orders were given to the great general Kau Lih-sz', to send the five sacred portraits and have them placed in the church, and a gift of a hundred pieces of silk accompanied these pictures of intelligence. Although the dragon's beard was then remote, their bows and swords were still within reach; while the solar horns sent forth their rays, and celestial visages seemed close at hand.[1]

In 744 the priest Kih-ho, in the kingdom of Syria, looking toward the star (of China), was attracted by its transforming influence, and observing the sun (i. e., Emperor), came to pay court to the most honorable. The Emperor commanded the priest Lo-han, the priest Pu-lun, and others, seven in all, together with the Greatly-virtuous Kih-ho, to perform a service of merit in the Hing-king palace. Thereupon the Emperor composed mottoes for the sides of the church, and the tablets were graced with the royal inscriptions; the accumulated gems emitted their effulgence, while their sparkling brightness vied with the ruby clouds; the transcripts of intelligence suspended in the void shot forth their rays as reflected by the sun; the bountiful gifts exceeded the height of the southern hills; the bedewing favors were deep as the eastern sea. Nothing is beyond the range of the right principle, and what is permissible may be identified; nothing is beyond the power of the holy man, and that which is practicable may be related.

The accomplished and enlightened Emperor Suhtsung rebuilt the Illustrious churches in Ling-wu and four other places; great benefits were conferred, and felicity began to increase; great munificence was displayed, and the imperial State became established.

The accomplished and military Emperor Taitsung magnified the sacred succession, and honored the latent principle of nature; always, on the incarnation-day, he bestowed celestial incense, and ordered the performance of a service of merit; he distributed of the imperial viands, in order to shed a glory on the Illustrious Congregation. Heaven is munificent in the dissemination of blessings, whereby the benefits of life are extended; the holy man embodies the original principle of virtue, whence he is able to counteract noxious influences.

Our sacred and sage-like, accomplished and military Emperor Kienchung appointed the eight branches of government, according

[1] These personages are the first five emperors of the Tang dynasty, Hiuen-tsung's predecessors. Their portraits were so admirably painted that they seemed to be present, their arms could almost be handled, and their foreheads, or "horns of the sun," radiated their intelligence.

to which he advanced or degraded the intelligent and dull; he opened up the nine categories, by means of which he renovated the illustrious decrees; his transforming influence pervaded the most abstruse principles, while openness of heart distinguished his devotions. Thus, by correct and enlarged purity of principle, and undeviating consistency in sympathy with others; by extended commiseration rescuing multitudes from misery, while disseminating blessings on all around, the cultivation of our doctrine gained a grand basis, and by gradual advances its influence was diffused. If the winds and rains are seasonable,the world will be at rest; men will be guided by principle, inferior objects will be pure; the living will be at ease, and the dead will rejoice; the thoughts will produce their appropriate response, the affections will be free, and the eyes will be sincere; such is the laudable condition which we of the Illustrious Religion are laboring to attain.

Our great benefactor, the Imperially-conferred-purple-gown priest,[8] I-sz', titular Great Statesman of the Banqueting-house, Associated Secondary Military Commissioner for the Northern Region, and Examination-palace Overseer, was naturally mild and graciously disposed; his mind susceptible of sound doctrine, he was diligent in the performance; from the distant city of Râjagriha,[9] he came to visit China; his principles more lofty than those of the three dynasties, his practice was perfect in every department; at first he applied himself to duties pertaining to the palace, eventually his name was inscribed on the military roll. When the Duke Koh Tsz'-í, Secondary Minister of State and Prince of Făn-yang, at first conducted the military in the northern region, the Emperor Suhtsung made him (I-sz') his attendant on his travels; although he was a private chamberlain, he assumed no distinction on the march; he was as claws and teeth to the duke, and in rousing the military he was as ears and eyes; he distributed the wealth conferred upon him, not accumulating treasure for his private use; he made offerings of the jewelry which had been given by imperial favor, he spread out a golden

[8] It was no rare occurrence for priests to occupy civil and military offices in the State during the Tang and preceding dynasties. Of the three titles here given, the first is merely an indication of rank, by which the bearer is entitled to a certain emolument from the State; the second is his title as an officer actively engaged in the imperial service; and the third is an honorary title, which gives to the possessor a certain status in the capital, without any duties or emolument connected therewith.

[9] *Wang-shih*, literally "Royal residence," which is also the translation of the Sanskrit word Râjagriha, is the name of a city on the banks of the Ganges, which occurs in several Buddhist works. As this was one of the most important of the Buddhist cities in India, it is natural to suppose that I-sz' was a Buddhist priest.

carpet for devotion; now he repaired the old churches, anon he increased the number of religious establishments; he honored and decorated the various edifices, till they resembled the plumage of the pheasant in its flight; moreover, practising the discipline of the Illustrious Religion, he distributed his riches in deeds of benevolence; every year he assembled those in the sacred office from four churches, and respectfully engaged them for fifty days in purification and preparation; the naked came and were clothed; the sick were attended to and restored; the dead were buried in repose; even among the most pure and self-denying of the Buddhists, such excellence was never heard of; the white-clad members of the Illustrious Congregation, now considering these men, have desired to engrave a broad tablet, in order to set forth a eulogy of their magnanimous deeds.

ODE.

The true Lord is without origin,
Profound, invisible, and unchangeable;
With power and capacity to perfect and transform,
He raised up the earth and established the heavens.

Divided in nature, he entered the world,
To save and to help without bounds;
The sun arose, and darkness was dispelled,
All bearing witness to his true original.

The glorious and resplendent, accomplished Emperor,
Whose principles embraced those of preceding monarchs,
Taking advantage of the occasion, suppressed turbulence;
Heaven was spread out and the earth was enlarged.

When the pure, bright Illustrious Religion
Was introduced to our Tang dynasty,
The Scriptures were translated, and churches built,
And the vessel set in motion for the living and the dead;
Every kind of blessing was then obtained,
And all the kingdoms enjoyed a state of peace.

When Kautsung succeeded to his ancestral estate,
He rebuilt the edifices of purity;
Palaces of concord, large and light,
Covered the length and breadth of the land.

The true doctrine was clearly announced,
Overseers of the church were appointed in due form;
The people enjoyed happiness and peace,
While all creatures were exempt from calamity and distress.

When Hiuentsung commenced his sacred career,
He applied himself to the cultivation of truth and rectitude;
His imperial tablets shot forth their effulgence,
And the celestial writings mutually reflected their splendors.

The imperial domain was rich and luxuriant,
While the whole land rendered exalted homage;
Every business was flourishing throughout,
And the people all enjoyed prosperity.

Then came Suhtsung, who commenced anew,
And celestial dignity marked the imperial movements.
Sacred as the moon's unsullied expanse,
While felicity was wafted like nocturnal gales.

Happiness reverted to the imperial household,
The autumnal influences were long removed;
Ebullitions were allayed, and risings suppressed,
And thus our dynasty was firmly built up.

Taitsung the filial and just
Combined in virtue with heaven and earth;
By his liberal bequests the living were satisfied,
And property formed the channel of imparting succor.

By fragrant mementoes he rewarded the meritorious,
With benevolence he dispensed his donations;
The solar concave appeared in dignity,
And the lunar retreat was decorated to extreme.

When Kienchung succeeded to the throne,
He began the cultivation of intelligent virtue;
His military vigilance extended to the four seas,
And his accomplished purity influenced all lands.

His light penetrated the secrecies of men,
And to him the diversities of objects were seen as in a mirror;
He shed a vivifying influence through the whole realm of nature,
And all outer nations took him for example.

The true doctrine how expansive!
Its responses are minute;
How difficult to name it!
To elucidate the three in one.

The sovereign has the power to act!
While the ministers record;
We raise this noble monument!
To the praise of great felicity.

This was erected in the 2d year of Kienchung, of the Tang dynasty (A. D. 781), on the 7th day of the 1st month, being Sunday.

Written by Lu Siu-yen, Secretary to Council, formerly Military Superintendent for Taichau; while the Bishop Ning-shu had the charge of the congregations of the Illustrious in the East.

[The two lines of Syriac are in the Estrangelo character, and run down the right and left sides of the Chinese respectively. Kircher translates this as follows:]

"Adam, Deacon, Vicar-episcopal and Pope of China.
In the time of the Father of Fathers, the Lord John Joshua, the Universal Patriarch."

[The translation of the Syriac at the foot of the stone is given here on the authority of Kircher:]

"In the year of the Greeks one thousand and ninety-two, the Lord Jazedbuzid, Priest and Vicar-episcopal of Cumdan the royal city, son of the enlightened Mailas, Priest of Balach a city of Turkestan, set up this tablet, whereon is inscribed the Dispensation of our Redeemer, and the preaching of the apostolic missionaries to the King of China."

[After this, in Chinese characters, is]

"The Priest Lingpau."

[Then follows:]

"Adam the Deacon, son of Jazedbuzid, Vicar-episcopal.
The Lord Sergius, Priest and Vicar-episcopal.

Sabar Jesus, Priest.
Gabriel, Priest, Archdeacon, and Ecclesiarch of Cumdan and Sarag."

[The following subscription is appended in Chinese:]

"Assistant Examiner: the High Statesman of the Sacred rites, the Imperially-conferred-purple-gown Chief Presbyter and Priest Yí-li."

[On the left-hand edge are the Syriac names of sixty-seven priests, and sixty-one are given in Chinese.]

THE HOLM-NESTORIAN EXPEDITION TO SIAN MCMVII.*

BY FRITS V. HOLM, M.R.A.S.

IT is with the greatest regret that I have not been able to enjoy the honor extended to me by the President of the Congress to accept his invitation to be present at the deliberations of the Congress and there exhibit and lecture on the replica of the Nestorian Stone of Sianfu; but I have thought fit to submit a brief statement of my work to the Council, to be dealt with as the President and his Council may decide.

After several months of constant study in the British Museum's library, and due to a keen interest I have always taken in matters Chinese from my former residence in that great empire, I decided to undertake an expedition to the capital of the province of Shensi, Sian-fu, known generally as the place of refuge of the Chinese Court during and after the Boxer troubles. I was fortunate enough to obtain the necessary financial means in London and New York, where I arrived in February, 1907, from Europe, and I likewise found much moral support from several university professors, scientists and museum authorities in various countries.

The chief aim of the expedition was to proceed to Sianfu and there on the spot examine the local and outer relations of the Nestorian Stone of A. D. 781, with a possible view of purchasing the ancient monument or obtaining a true copy or monolith replica of the same.

I copy the following paragraphs from my book-manuscript (part I):

"Of all the historical monuments near and in Sianfu, the famous Nestorian Stone, or *Chingchiaopei* as the natives call it, un-

* Communicated to the XV. International Congress of Orientalists at Copenhagen, August 19, 1908, to the Anthropological Society of Washington, the Explorers' Club of New York, West Point Military Academy, Johns Hopkins University, etc. during 1909.

FRITS V. HOLM, M.R.A.S.
Standing by the Nestorian Stone before its removal.

doubtedly ranks as the very first. It is perhaps not too much to say, that while these lines are being written on the river Han in Hupeh province *medio* July, 1907, the Nestorian Tablet, as it stands outside the west gate of Sian, unheeded and neglected, although known to science, is the most valuable historical monument in the world, that has not, as yet, been acquired by any museum or scientific society or corporation.

"It is true that prints and photographs have been taken of the famous inscription and that translations have been made and published of the same,—but the stone stands there, lonely, in all kinds of weather, and only the very rare traveler, who gets as far as Sianfu, or an occasional missionary, pays the Chingchiaopei a visit of short duration.

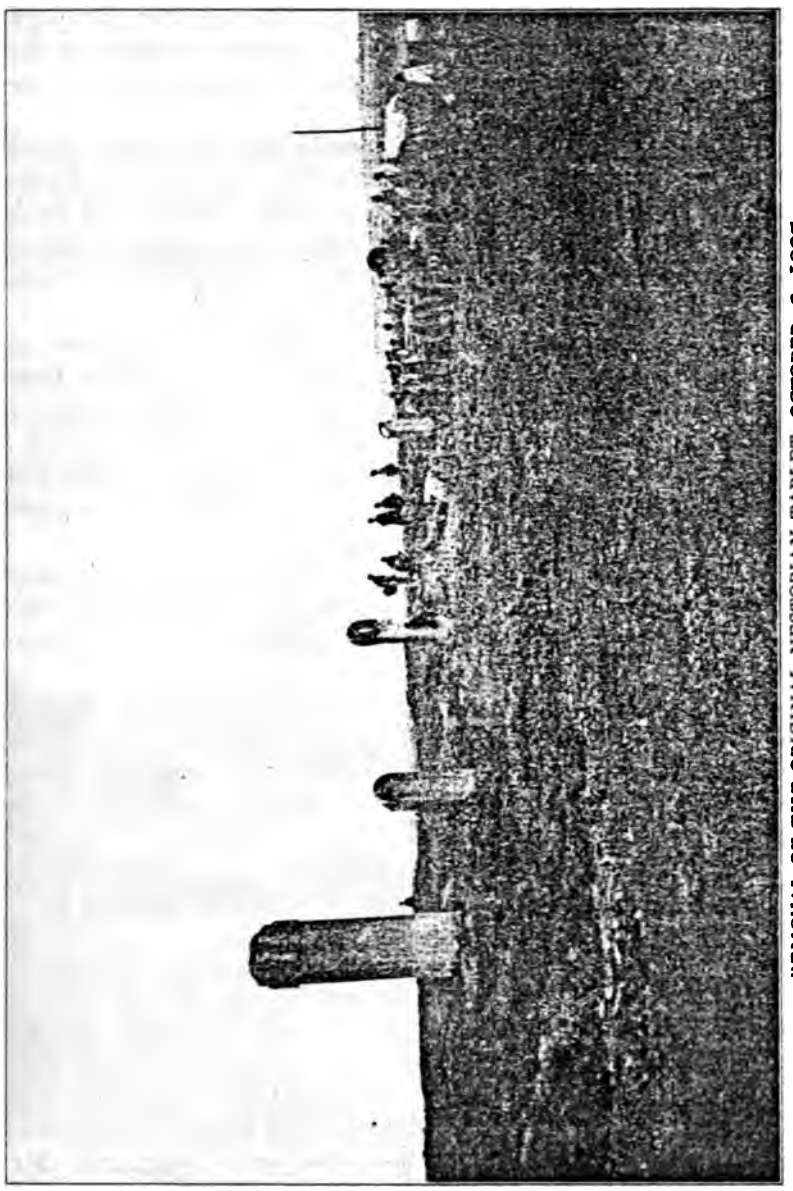
"As already formerly alluded to, Christianity first came to China in the beginning of the sixth century in its Nestorian form and was allowed to flourish during some three centuries under the protection of the early emperors of the famous Tang dynasty. Still Nestorians were found in Cathay and Manji, i. e., North and South China, by Marco Polo, when he traveled in these regions towards the end of the thirteenth century.

"The priests of Nestorianism enjoyed the favor of the court and were allowed to erect churches and monasteries. The Nestorian Tablet proves above all suspicion the early existence of Christianity in the Middle Kingdom.

"The Chingchiaopei is dated A. D. 781 and was accidentally found by some laborers in 1625, when it was placed on a "fair pedestal" by the governor of Shensi. It was early visited by many Chinese who took an interest in the ancient monument's inscription, which is marvelously well preserved.

"For decades after, the stone was little thought of and rarely visited, and the arch which had been built over it disappeared. Towards the end of the last century (1891) a small roof was erected over the stone at the instigation of the *corps diplomatique* at Peking, which had induced the Tsungli Yamen, the then Foreign Office, to guard the monument against injury. One hundred taels were sent to Sianfu from Peking; but in those days there was no post office, and only five taels reached Sian in safety, the balance having been mysteriously absorbed underway. Thus the shed erected was of a very inferior kind and to-day has quite disappeared. Mr. W. W. Rockill, the U. S. Minister to China, who made a name for himself by journeying in the Koko Nor Lake district some fifteen years ago, told me, while in Peking, that "the Chinese thought

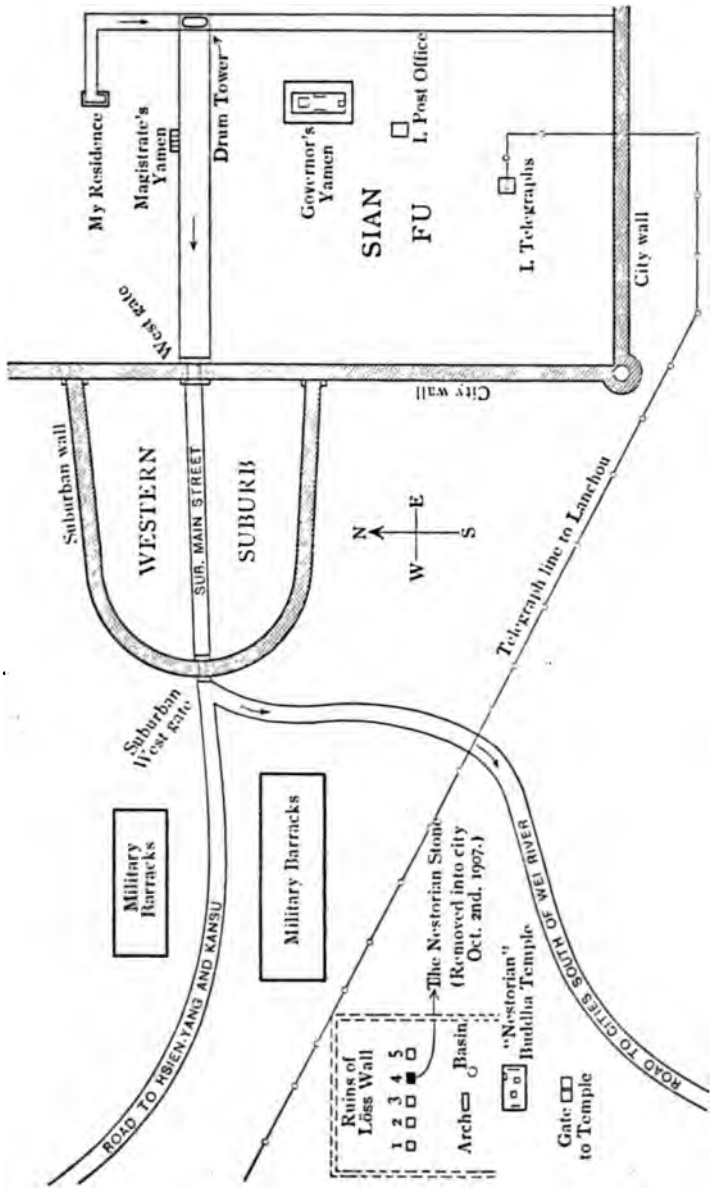
quite a good deal of the stone and had a shed erected to protect it some time ago"; but I am afraid the honorable gentleman would



REMOVAL OF THE ORIGINAL NESTORIAN TABLET, OCTOBER, 2, 1907.
Photograph by Holm.

be very disappointed to see the precious old monument stand as naked and unprotected as its innumerable fellow-stones of minor

value, which are to be found by the score in the vicinity of the ancient capital. Several translations, more or less correct, more or



SKETCH-MAP OF THE POSITION OF THE NESTORIAN TABLET.
From a sketch by Mr. Holm.

less complete, of the Chinese and Syriac inscriptions have been published. The task of translating the ca. 2000 characters on the

stone is a very difficult one, but the translation by the well-known sinologist Dr. Wylie,* is generally considered the best.

"On the 10th of June, 1907, I first visited the resting-place of the unique monument. I went out alone on horseback through the west gate, traversed the western suburb and, having passed some military barracks outside the western suburban gate, had no difficulty in finding the old Buddha temple, on the premises of which the stone is situated. A large brick entrance in ruins and some remnants of a decayed Löss wall show the former large extent of the temple. But to-day we only find a comparatively modern center building, which is more of a farm than a temple. Everybody was busy with the wheat harvest, even the three Buddhist priests, and nobody interfered with me as I walked about snapshooting and wondering at the ruinous surroundings of such an invaluable monument.

"Behind the farm-temple is a piece of ground where a large stone arch and several memorial slabs are situated. In a row of five stones, the Chingchiaopei is the fourth, counting towards the east. Like most stones of a similar kind it stands on the back of a clumsily worked stone-tortoise, but nothing is left of a protecting shed, and nothing indicates, as some authors most likely wrongly, assert, that the stone and its neighbors, which do not even stand in a straight line, have ever been built into a brick wall. An old picture of the stone shows it encased in a kind of brick niche, and it is by no means impossible that this has given rise to the wrongful idea concerning a brick wall. But there is no trace of any niche around the tablet, nor of any later wooden shed, and the 74 years old chief priest, who has been constantly on the spot for over 50 years, only remembers the stone standing free and frank and lonely —looking apart from the ramshackle shed of 1891.

"The much-discussed cross on the stone is not very plain and must almost be searched after before found, but the characters are beautifully preserved with the exception of one or two which are said to have been wilfully injured by the Bonzes, who thought that too much attention was being paid to this ancient relic of Christian fame. Still this is hardly probable.

"The other stones on the temple ground are of no immediate value or interest, their inscriptions giving the history of the farm-temple and the names and titles of the various donors.

"The photographs show the slab to be very large; it is ten

* Dr. Wylie's translation, taken from the second part of Dr. S. Wells Williams's great work, *The Middle Kingdom*, precedes this chapter.

feet high, its weight being two tons. The difficulties in connection with the transport of the original or a replica were consequently appalling, as it would be necessary to transport the stone on a specially constructed cart over 350 miles to the nearest railway station, Chengchow."....

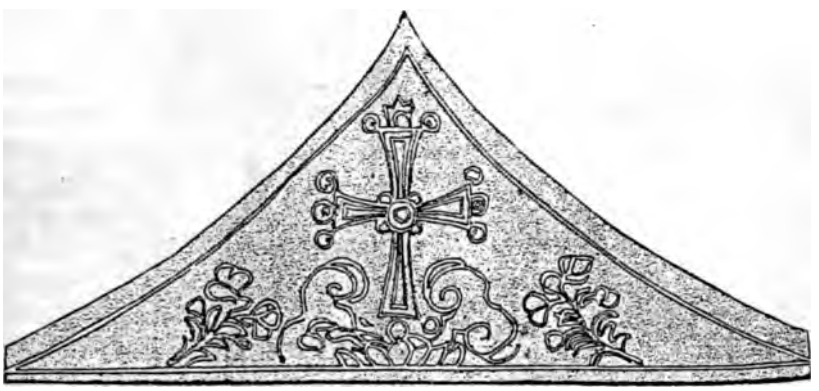
YÜ SHOW, THE CHINESE HIGH PRIEST.
Seated where the Nestorian stone had stood before its removal.
Photograph by Holm.

I may shortly mention that I did everything in my power to obtain the original by applying to the local authorities in an indirect manner etc.; but although the Chinese do not care more to-day for the stone than for any ordinary brick, they at once got

suspicious; and I might as well have endeavored to "lift" the Rosetta Stone out of the British Museum, or take the Moabite Stone from the Louvre, as to carry away the Chingchiaopei from Sian.

I shall not dwell here on the almost insurmountable difficulties the officials and even some of the foreign missionaries laid in my way when I decided to confine my efforts to obtain and carry home to Europe or America a replica of the venerable tablet. Suffice it to say that both the local, the transport and eventually the customs difficulties were all overcome in due course, and after eleven months on Chinese soil I was able to leave Shanghai on the last day of February, 1908, bound for New York.

The original Nestorian tablet of A. D. 781, as well as my replica, made in 1907, are both carved from the stone quarries of



THE CROSS ON THE NESTORIAN STONE.

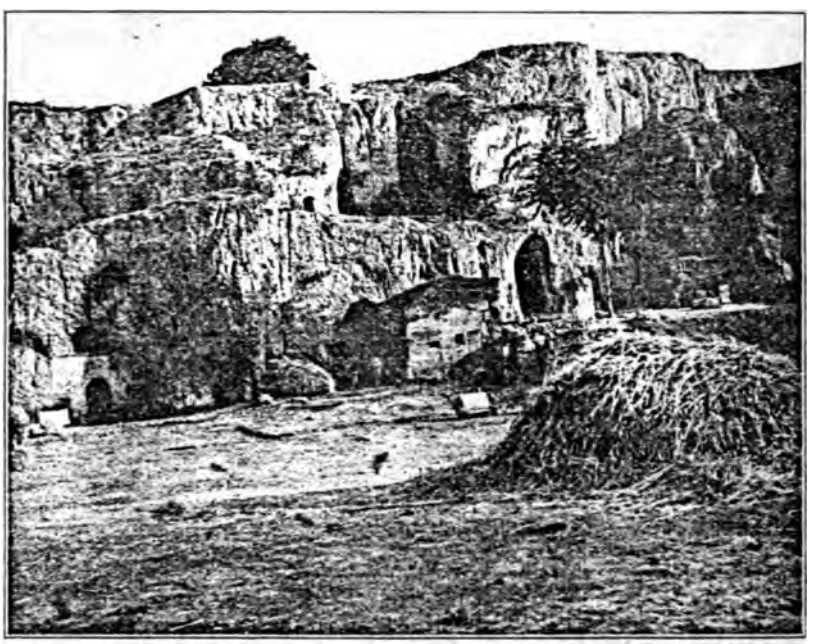
It is believed to be a copy from memory of the Roman papal cross of the sixth century.

Fu Ping Hsien; the material is a black, sub-granular limestone with small oolites scattered through it, probably dating from the Carboniferous formation of some 15 or 20 millions of years ago.

This replica is one of the most beautiful pieces of Chinese workmanship I have ever seen. In the first place there is not a measure, not a character, not a detail that differs from the original tablet—even the weight is the same. In the second place this piece of art was executed by four native stone-cutters in eleven days, including polishing, after the huge slab had been brought from the Fuping quarries to Sian. In the third place the Chinese artisans have been able to accomplish the miracle of carving the cross and chiseling the Syriac characters, which they did of course not know, to absolute perfection.

On the 16th of June, 1908, in accordance with arrangement with Sir Purdon Clarke, Director, the replica was deposited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the City of New York, as a loan.

Although the replica is not yet the property of the museum, there is a probability that it may never leave its new abode again; but the fact should not be overlooked that all museums and universities of the world can now be supplied, if so desired, with plaster casts of the Nestorian tablet, casts which would not be more accurate, had they been taken from the original itself.



CAVE DWELLINGS IN SHENSI.
Photograph by Holm.

It is not a generally known fact that in North China, in the provinces of Shansi, Shensi, Kansu and Honan, thousands of Chinese families live all their lives in caves dug out of the Löss. This wonderful geological deposit is indeed the fortune of the peasant of North China. It yields two harvests a year, the first a wheat-crop, the second a crop of maize, millet and the like. And when the agriculturist seeks a home, he takes his spade or shovel and he digs for his wife, his children and himself, a cave in the soft Löss wall, which, although badly ventilated, gives him a safe shelter, cool in the

heat of the summer and offering a cosy corner during the harsh winter. These caves are almost destitute of any furniture; sometimes we only find the *kang* or hot bedstead, a "sofa" made of Löss and heated from below with a steady fire, which cheers the whole family and the rare traveler during the long winter night.

Many a time during my expedition has it been necessary for my men, my animals and myself, to seek the shelter of an abandoned cave against the terrible dust-storms of North China; and once I slept in a cave with a corpse in a black coffin as neighbor, while my men and beasts occupied the neighboring cave with the *garde funèbre*.

THE GATES OF SIANFU.
Photograph by Holm.

Three miles before we enter the east gate of Sianfu, which towers like a huge castle over the high wall, we leave the last Löss wall for some time to come; it is about sixty feet high and has an abundance of caves—in fact the greater part of the population of the hamlet of Chilipu lives in caves.

We may take it for granted to-day that in times gone by, many a Nestorian convert was to be found as a permanent resident of these humble caves.

Once more to quote my manuscript (II. part):

"The second day of October, 1907, saw, at Sianfu, the fulfilment of an act which ought to have taken place nearly 300 years ago.

NESTORIAN REPLICA BEING UNLOADED FROM A FREIGHT CAR AT HANKOW, JANUARY, 1908.

Photograph by Holm.

"Being the day previous to the final departure of the replica, I rode out to the farm-temple in order to supervise various arrange-

ments concerning the packing of the stone etc., and in order to "square" my account with the old chief priest Yü Show. Nearing the temple grounds I noticed with feelings that can easier be imagined than described, that the original Nestorian Tablet had disappeared!

"I galloped up to its former resting-place, and all I saw, was a hole in the ground, where the monument's pedestal, the sad-looking stone-tortoise had been left. The stone itself had certainly gone, and I wondered whether any harm had befallen the replica in the temple-barn. Half a minute brought me to the temple where I found the replica in prime condition.

"The chief priest said that the officials had caused the tablet to be moved—he did not know its destination. So, my business over, I rode back through the western suburb, promising to come back the next day to see the replica off.

"About half way between the suburb and the city gates I overtook the Nestorian Tablet, which was being slowly carried by no less than 48 coolies towards the city. They carried it, hanging under a multitude of bamboo yokes, in the same way heavy coffins are usually transported.

"The 'Peilin,' or 'forest of tablets,' a place where innumerable small and large tablets with inscriptions of great age are kept, was the destination of the Chingchiaopei. The 'Peilin' is a place of great interest, and it is well-nigh incredible that the officials on the spot had never thought of moving the stone thither.

"The repeated, earnest representations of the *corps diplomatique* and the missionary bodies in Peking for the preservation of the ancient Christian relic had, through years, proved futile. The missionaries on the spot had done next to nothing to preserve "their" venerable tablet. It was therefore a great satisfaction to me to know that my expedition had been the direct cause for the removal of the stone to a place, where it will not be exposed to wind and weather, and where it will stand a fair chance of being able to adequately fight a long, long battle against age and time."

THE EXPLOITS OF MR. FRITS V. HOLM.

BY THE EDITOR OF "THE SHANGHAI TIMES."

Mr. Holm, the enterprising young Danish traveler who on another page gives an account of his recent Nestorian expedition to Sian-fu, certainly deserves the heartiest congratulations on the success of his very notable achievement. Although the rare value of his

prize, the earliest Christian monument in China dating from 781 A. D., has long been acknowledged by students and missionaries, he is the first who has had the enterprise to cause a copy to be made and conveyed to the Western world. Casts of this replica may now be made as frequently as there is any demand for them, with as absolute accuracy as if made from the original stone which is now jealously guarded in the most remote quarter of the earth.

Mr. Holm, who was only twenty-five when he started on his expedition, was formerly special correspondent to the *London Tribune* in China, prior to which period he had received an officer's education in the Royal Danish Navy, and so was already a traveler and explorer of repute when he entered on this latest mission. It was in London in the early part of 1907 that he formed the idea of procuring a replica of the famous tablet with the scientific and historical value of which he had made himself acquainted during his previous residence in China. Obtaining the support of some friends, whom he persuaded of the feasibility of his plans, he came out to China again, and proceeded to Tientsin, where he completed his final preparations for the expedition. He left Tientsin in company with two Chinese attendants, an interpreter and a boy, on the 2d of May, 1907, and traveled in a house-boat to Taokow, where the Peking Syndicate had an establishment, and thence continued his journey on horseback westward to Weichingfu and Honanfu, where he organized a regular caravan. Setting out again when all was ready, he reached his destination, Sianfu, on the 30th of May, and then proceeded cautiously to put his long-cherished plan into execution.

Taking up his quarters as unostentatiously as possible he engaged the services of a skilled Chinese draughtsman and three stone-cutters, explained to them what he wanted, and made a bargain to pay them 150 taels (about $100) for an exact copy of the famous tablet. The contractors, as they may be called, were obliged to proceed with the task very cautiously indeed. First of all a suitable piece of stone had to be procured; Mr. Holm stipulating for a slab of the same material and dimensions as the original. This being procured, it had to be conveyed to a shed without attracting notice, which was done; it then had to be shaped and dressed, and afterward the stone-cutters, chiseling from the marvelously accurate drawings of the Chinese draughtsman, slowly and tediously proceeded with the task of carving it.

It is said that the foreigners in Sian, missionaries all with one exception, did not view the enterprise with any great favor; still no opposition was offered and at length it was finished.

Mr. Holm was then in Hankow, having gone there for various reasons, among them ill-health, after the work had been fairly started in Sian. On hearing of the completion of the undertaking, he hastened back to the Shensi capital, invited the Chinese officials to inspect the replica, which they did, and finally, after much negotiation, succeeded in obtaining permission to take it away. Mr. Holm, it may be mentioned, is the only foreigner so far, who has been officially received by the mandarins of the Shensi Foreign Office in their yamen, where he was most courteously and considerately treated by the President and members of the Provincial Board of Foreign Affairs.

The conveyance of the great stone from Sian to Hankow was an immense undertaking. First of all it took 24 coolies to lift it from the ground and place it on the heavy cart which had been specially constructed to carry it to Chengchow, Honan, where it was put on a railway truck and by that means taken to Hankow.

Here, according to statements made by Mr. Holm himself, his troubles really began, and strange to relate, it was not from Chinese officials they proceeded, but from the foreign Commissioner of Customs, a Mr. Aglen. For some unexplained reason this gentleman seized the stone and impounded it, instructing Messrs. Jardine, Matheson & Co. not to let it leave their premises on any account until they heard further from him.

Sir Robert Hart, who knew of Mr. Holm's enterprise from his own narrative, issued instructions that the stone was to be restored to the owner, for him to do what he liked with it.

Mr. Holm then returned to Hankow, obtained possession of the great piece of work once more, shipped it on board the "Loongwo" to Shanghai, where it was put on board the s. s. "Kennebec" for final conveyance to New York via the Suez Canal, a voyage of about 15,000 miles.

NESTORIUS AND THE NESTORIANS.

THE Nestorian Church is a sect which calls itself Chaldæan Christianity. In its doctrines it follows Nestorius, who was patriarch of Constantinople (428-431) where for three years he exercised an unusual power but succumbed in the conflict with his rival Cyril of Alexandria mainly through the enmity of Pulcheria, the influential sister of Emperor Theodosius II.

Nestorius, a disciple of Theodorus of Mopsuestia, had been ordained a presbyter at Antioch and in his theology he followed the austere traditions of the Antiochian school. When called to Constantinople as patriarch he came with the intention of establishing the "pure doctrine." In his installation sermon before the emperor, he said: "Give me a country cleansed of heretics and I will return heaven to you in its place. Help me to overcome heretics and I will help you to conquer the Persians."

Nestorius combined with his zeal for the truth the awkwardness of the monk who was not fitted to cope with the complicated conditions at the capital, the power of the emperor as head of the Church, the intrigue of the Byzantine court and the influence of the masses. He had offended Pulcheria, who under the title Augusta, shared with her brother the Emperor, the honors of imperial power. While Theodosius favored Nestorius, she, the Augusta, sided with his enemy, the wily Bishop of Alexandria.

In those days dogmatic subtleties and theological terms became issues of great controversies and Nestorius took special exception to the name "Mother of God" which was commonly attributed to Mary. The term was an old pagan expression and is a literal translation of the Egyptian *Neter Mut* by which pagan devotees addressed the goddess Isis.

A presbyter of Nestorius, Anastasius of Antioch, who had accompanied his master to Constantinople, once preached a sermon

in which he declared, "Call ye not Mary, mother of God, for she was but human and God cannot be born of a human being.[1]

These words gave great offense, for the term "Mother of God" was very dear to the Egyptian Church and had been adopted by the other congregations. But Nestorius supported his presbyter and thereby was implicated in a struggle with the worshipers of Mary. He was accused of splitting up the personality of Christ into two separate beings, Christ born of God in eternity, and the human Jesus, son of Mary.

Cyril succeeded in having Nestorius condemned at the council of Ephesus in 431 before all the members had assembled, among them his friend, Johannes, the Bishop of Antioch, who arrived too late to undo the mischief that had been done. The emperor protested and declared the council as illegal. But Cyril had gained a powerful ally in the person of the Archimandrite Dalmatius, a hermit who had stayed in his cell for forty years and was reverenced by the masses of the people as a saint. He stirred the populace and intimidated the Emperor. After several vain attempts to reconcile the two parties, the Emperor yielded to the insistent protestations of the numerous supporters of Cyril and had Nestorius deposed.

The expelled patriarch lived for four years in the monastery of Euprepius near Antioch, where he still exercised considerable influence on the Syrian Church so as to rouse the suspicion of his enemies. Accordingly he was removed into more out of the way places. One edict ordered him to be sent to Petra in Arabia, but according to Socrates, the Church historian, he was deported to one of the Egyptian oases. When this was raided by a Blemnyan desert tribe he fell into the hands of the barbarians, who however treated their venerable prisoner with consideration and even respect. Later on we find him in Panopolis. In his last years he was dragged about from place to place in the confines of Egypt like a common criminal under the supervision of Egyptian guards. He wrote the story of his life under the title "Tragedy" which was known and utilized by Irenæus who admired him greatly for his noble character, his patience and Christian piety. An extract of this same book of Nestorius exists in a manuscript preserved in the Abbey at Monte Cassino, published in the *Synodikon* by Lupus.[2]

Nestorius had been crushed and he died in the power of his enemies who embittered the end of his life, but the problem he had raised continued to upset the Church for a long time. He had many

[1] Socrates, *Hist. Ec.*, VII, chap. 32.

[2] A reprint of the manuscript is also found in *Mansi Concil. T. V.*

friends and disciples among his parishioners at Constantinople, but in Syria his adherents predominated and the bitterness with which they were condemned by Cyril's party led to a schism and the establishment of an independent Syrian Church. The Nestorians of Syria recognized the bishop of Seleucia as their head, under the name of Catholicus.

These Syrian Christians shared the fervor and missionary zeal of their founder Nestorius. They distinguished themselves through

THE CROSS ON THE TOMB OF ST. THOMAS NEAR MADRAS.[3]

learnedness and established good schools wherever they went. Their main seat and center of learning was Nisibis. The Nestorians sent out missionaries toward the East and extended their Church into Mesopotamia, Persia, India and Tibet.

The Indian Nestorians are commonly called St. Thomas Christians, and there is a remarkable monument left of them near Madras

[3] It may be of interest to note that the cross preserved on the Nestorian stone bears a great resemblance to that on the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle, near Madras, India, which for good reasons is assumed to date from the same century. Marco Polo's interesting account of it can be found in Chapter XVIII of his well-known book of travel. We reproduce the picture from page 353 of the edition of Henry Yule published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

which is mentioned by Marco Polo and is regarded as the tomb of St. Thomas, the first Christian apostle to India.

Nestorian Christians upon the whole follow the ritual of the Greek Church. Part of them united later on with the Roman Church and are now commonly called United Nestorians. Their patriarch calls himself Mar Joseph and his residence is Diarbekr, the ancient Amida in the valley of the upper Tigris. The others who have remained independent recognize as their Catholicus, a patriarch who bears the name Mar Simeon, residing at Kotchannas near Julamerk in the upper valley of the greater Zab, in the territory of the Hakkiare, a tribe of the Kurds. They are strongly under Russian influence and it is not impossible that in time they will join the Greek Church.

At present the Nestorians are weak in numbers and influence. They may not be more than one hundred and fifty thousand souls, but in former days they were a flourishing Church, and for a time it seemed as if Nestorian Christianity would be the state religion of Tibet.

From Tibet Nestorian Christianity spread even into China where it was welcomed by the emperor and had a fair chance of competing with Buddhism and Confucianism for supremacy. It is still an unsolved problem how this once so powerful Church could disappear without leaving a trace in the minds of the people . We do not yet know in detail how Nestorianism lost its hold on the Tibetans and the Chinese. We would scarcely believe how influential they once were in the center of Asia had not a happy accident brought to light that remarkable slab which bears witness to former Nestorian activity in China. P. C.

THE NESTORIANS IN CHINA.

ACCORDING TO THE LATE S. WELLS WILLIAMS.

[S. Wells Williams, late professor of the Chinese Language and Literature at Yale College, in his valuable work *The Middle Kingdom*, Vol. II, Chapter XIX, speaks of the Christian missions in China, and since the book is not very accessible to our readers we collect here those portions which refer to the Nestorians in China. Bracketed passages are a condensation. The other paragraphs are direct quotations from *The Middle Kingdom*.—ED.]

THE time of the arrival of the Nestorians in China cannot be specified certainly, but there are grounds for placing it as early as A. D. 505: Ebedjesus Sobiensis remarks that "the Catholicos Salibazacha created the metropolitan sees of Sina and Samarcand, though some say they were constituted by Achæus and Silas." Silas was patriarch of the Nestorians from A. D. 505 to 520; and Achæus was archbishop at Seleucia in 415. The metropolitan bishop of Sina is also mentioned in a list of those subject to this patriarch, published by Amro, and it is placed in the list after that of India, according to the priority of foundation.

The only record yet found in China itself of the labors of the Nestorians is the celebrated monument which was discovered at Sí-ngan fu in Shensí, in 1625; and though the discussion regarding its authenticity has been rather warm between the Jesuits and their opponents, the weight of evidence, both internal and external, leaves no doubt regarding its verity. It has been found quite recently to be in good preservation, and rubbings taken from it are nearly perfect. The Syriac characters composing the signatures of Olopun and his associates have made it an object of much interest to the natives; these, as well as the singular cross on its top, have doubtless contributed to its preservation. It was set up in 1859 by a Chinese who had so much regard for it as to rebuild it in the brick wall

where it had once stood outside of the city.[1] The slab is a hard black limestone.

It has been often translated since the first attempt by Boime, published with the original by Kircher in Holland. In 1845 Dr. E. C. Bridgman published Kircher's Latin translation with the French version of Dalquié, and another of his own, which brought it more into notice. The style is very terse, and the exact meaning not easily perceived even by learned natives. As Dr. Bridgman says, "Were a hundred Chinese students employed on the document they would probably each give a different view of the meaning in some parts of the inscription." This is apparent when four or five of them are compared. The last one, by A. Wylie, of the London Mission at Shanghai, goes over the whole subject with a fulness and care which leaves little to be desired.[2]

Timothy, a patriarch, sent Subchal-Jesus in 780, who labored in Tartary and China for many years, and lost his life on his return, when his place was supplied by Davidis, who was consecrated metropolitan. In the year 845 an edict of Wu-tsung commanded the priests that belonged to the sect that came from Ta Tsin, amounting to no less than three thousand persons, to retire to private life. The two Arabian travelers in the ninth century report that many Christians perished in the siege of Canfu. Marco Polo's frequent allusions lead us to conclude that the Nestorians were both numerous and respected.

He mentions the existence of a church at Hangchau, and two at Chinkiang, built by the prefect Marsarchis, who was himself a member of that church, and alludes to their residence in most of the towns and countries of Central Asia.

The existence of a Christian prince called Prester John, in Central Asia, is spoken of by Marco Polo and Montecorvino. The exact position of his dominions, and the extent of his influence in favor of that faith, have been examined by Col. Yule and M. Pauthier in their editions of the Venetian, and the glamor which once surrounded him has been found to have arisen mostly from hearsay reports, and from confounding different persons under one name.

[1] This statement appears to be a mistake as pointed out by Mr. Frits V. Holm. See p. 27.

[2] Visdelou in *Bibliothèque Oriental*, Vol. IV. Kircher's *China Illustrata*, Part I, Antwerp, 1667. *Chinese Repository*, XIV, pp. 201-229. Huc, *Christianity in China*, I, pp. 49-58. Wylie, *North China Herald*, 1855, reprinted in *Journal of Am. Oriental Soc.*, Vol. V, p. 277. Archimandrite Palladius published a Russian version. Williamson, *Journeys in North China*, I, p. 382. *Le Catholicisme en Chine au VIIIe Siècle de notre ère avec une nouvelle traduction de l'inscription de Sy-nganfou*, par P. D. de Thiersant, Paris, 1877.

When the conquests of Genghis khan and his descendants threw all Asia into commotion, this Prester John, ruler of the Kara Kitai Tartars in northern China, fell before him, A. D. 1203. The Nestorians suffered much, but maintained a precarious footing in China during the time of the Yuen dynasty, having been cut off from all help and intercourse with the mother church since the rise of the Moslems. They had ceased long before this period to maintain the purity of the faith, however, and had apparently done nothing to teach and diffuse the Bible, which the tablet intimates was in part or in whole translated by Olopun, under the Emperor's auspices.

At the present time no works composed by their priests, or remains of any churches belonging to them or buildings erected by them, are known to exist in the Empire, though perhaps some books may yet be found. The buildings erected by the Nestorians for churches and dwellings were, of course, no better built than other Chinese edifices, and would not long remain when deserted; while, to account still further for the absence of books, the Buddhists and other opposers may have sought out and destroyed such as existed, which even if carefully kept would not last many generations. The notices of the tablet in Chinese authors, which Mr. Wylie has brought together, prove that those writers had confounded the *King kiao* with Zoroastrianism and Manicheism, and such a confusion is not surprising. The records of futurity alone will disclose to us the names and labors of the devoted disciples and teachers of true Christianity in the Nestorian church, who lived and died for the gospel among the Chinese.

[Williams further states that during the thirteenth century Roman Catholic missionaries came to China and the history of their zealous and successful work can be learned from their own writings, especially their *Lettres Edifiantes* and *Annales de la foi* as well as in the works of Huc and Marshall in later times. Corvino, a Roman Catholic missionary, arrived in India in 1291 and thence proceeded in 1292 with a caravan to China where he was kindly received by Kublai Khan. He came in contact with the native Chinese Christians, but they were by no means pleased at his arrival. The Nestorians opposed his progress for eleven years and hampered him in his work whenever they could, but he built churches and baptized nearly 6000 persons in spite of their opposition.

Little or nothing is known concerning the further history of the Nestorians. The Roman Catholics made some progress, and the last Mongol Emperor Shun Ti sent a European by the name of André as ambassador to the Pope with a letter from the Alain

Christians asking for a bishop to take Corvino's place. Pope Benedict XII responded by sending four nuntios.]

It would seem that during the sway of the Mongol princes these missionaries carried on their work chiefly among their tribes. It is, if such was the case, less surprising, therefore, that we hear nothing of them and their converts after the Chinese troops had expelled Kublai's weak descendants from the country in 1368, since they would naturally follow them into Central Asia. After the final establishment of the Ming dynasty almost nothing is known concerning either them or the Nestorians, and it is probable that during the wanderings of the defeated Mongols the adherents of both sects gradually lapsed into ignorance and thence easily into Mohammedanism and Buddhism. There is no reasonable doubt, however, that during the three centuries ending with the accession of Hungwu the greater part of Central Asia and Northern China was the scene of many flourishing Christian communities.

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